138. Needs of the cardamom ryots.

MR. C. A. ABDUR RAHIM (*Peermade taluk*) first urged the necessity for giving representation to the Travancore Cardamom Planters' Association in the Legislative Council. Since special representation in the Council had been given to the European Planters' Associations and the mercantile community, the Cardamom Planters' Association could also claim for a seat in the Council. The Association was a big organisation with a capital of Rs. 20 lakhs and was controlling all cardamom cultivation in the High Ranges. A member should either be nominated by the Government to represent the Association or it should be allowed to return a member by election.

The member next said that the grouping of Minachil with Devicolam and Changanachery with Peermade for purposes of election to the Legislative Council caused much inconvenience to the voters of Peermade and Devicolam. Most of the voters in the latter two taluks were chiefly residing in British India and were not in a position to know anything about the candidates standing for election from the other taluks. The Peermade and Devicolam taluks should therefore be amalgamated into one constituency for purposes of election to the Council.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Abdur Rahim, your first point about representation of the Cardamom Planters' Association in the Legislative Council will be considered and your second point *viz.*, the grouping of the Devicolam and Peermade taluks as one constituency, which has already been raised by another member, will be considered when the question of re-grouping the constituencies is taken up for consideration.

139. Rights of women.

MRS. WALSALAM ROSE (*Nominated*) first represented about the necessity for amending the law of inheritance among Christians as regards the shares of daughters and wives. Sections 16, 17, 18 and 24 of the Christian Succession Regulation governed the rights of the Christian widow. Under the Regulation, when the widow took the whole of her husband's estate, she took it absolutely, but when she got only a share of the estate, she took only a limited interest in such share. This restriction on the widow's right was an anomaly and the Regulation should be so amended as to give the widow an absolute right over immovable properties, even in cases where she inherited only a portion. Under the Indian Succession Act in British India, the widow took an absolute estate in one-third of her husband's estate, when he left lineal descendants and half of it when he left surviving none of his father's kindred. The Nayar Regulation placed no restriction on the shares inherited by Nayar widows from their husbands. Under the Mahomedan Law also there were no such restrictions. The law on the subject should therefore be suitably amended.

Again, under Section 18 of the Christian Succession Regulation, the sons were entitled to have the whole of the intestate's property divided equally among themselves, subject to the claims of the

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daughters for *stridhana*, and the *stridhana* of a daughter was fixed at one-fourth the value of the share of a son, subject to a maximum of Rs. 5,000. Thus the daughter was not given a right to a share in the assets of her parents when she received *stridhana*. Under the Hindu law as applied to the South Travancore Christians, the daughters were in a better position, because they were entitled to inherit their mother's *stridhana* properties, to the exclusion of the sons. The Nayar Regulation gave equal rights to the sons and daughters. Even under the Mahomedan Law, the daughter got half the share of the son. Under the Indian Succession Act, the daughters and sons inherited equally the parent's estate. The provisions of the Christian Succession Regulation should therefore be amended to redress the grievances of the daughters.

The member next spoke about the necessity for modifying the curricula of studies prescribed for girls. The same curricula of studies were now prescribed for boys and girls. The curricula of studies for girls should be so adapted as to make them good mothers, efficient house-wives and responsible citizens. Only 5 per cent. of the girls receiving education found any use in the existing system of education imparted to them, while the remaining 95 per cent. suffered. The question of female education was a very important one and the Government should bestow special attention on it.

A Regulation should be promulgated on the lines of the Sarda Act in British India, to prevent the evil effects of child marriages. This would also frustrate the attempt of the people in British India to conduct child marriages in Travancore, in order to circumvent the provisions of the Sarda Act.

Lastly, the member urged the need for introducing compulsory free primary education in the State. The total population of the State was 5·1 millions, of which nearly 50 per cent. were females. Taking the primary school age as 5 to 15, the population of school going children was 2·15 millions. But the primary schools, departmental, aided and unaided, imparted instruction only to 0·4 million people, of whom 0·35 million were boys and the remaining girls. Thus only 2 persons out of 9 were literate. Among males one in three was literate, while among females only one in seven was so. On an average, only one in 60 was literate in English. The necessity for the introduction of compulsory primary education had been urged on the attention of the Government by representations at the past several sessions of the Assembly. The advancement of the State depended upon removing illiteracy from the land. Compulsory education was the only means of achieving this end quickly. There were 697 incomplete primary schools in 1104. These schools should be converted into complete schools. Otherwise these schools would serve no purpose A Bill for the introduction of compulsory primary education was introduced in the Legislative Council 17 years back, but nothing came out of it. If compulsion for all was not possible owing to financial reasons, compulsory education should be introduced at least in the case of girls. To leave a girl uneducated was more dangerous than to leave a boy illiterate.

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DEWAN'S REPLY: Mrs. Rose, your suggestions for amending the Christian Succession Regulation will be considered.

I presume that the curricula of studies prescribed for women will come under the purview of the Committee we propose to appoint to consider and report on the system of education in the State.

It is a point to be considered whether legislation is needed in this State on the lines of the Sarda Act. But the matter is, I gather, likely to be discussed in the Legislative Council on a resolution which has been tabled by one of the members.

As regards compulsory free primary education, I can only repeat what I have said to other speakers *viz.*, that Government consider in the present stage of education in Travancore, that the necessity for statutory compulsion has not yet been established.

140. Grievances of the depressed classes.

SRIMATI T. V. NARAYANI (*Nominated*) first expressed her feelings of gratitude to the Government for giving her an opportunity to ventilate the grievances of the depressed classes, who formed the the majority of the population. Though the grievances had been repeatedly brought to the notice of the Government from the very inception of the Assembly, they remained still unredressed. The member hoped that at least when the reformed Assembly met next year there would be no necessity for repeating the same representation.

The disabilities, political, social and religious, suffered by the Ezhavas, Pulayas, Parayas and other communities, known as the non-caste Hindus, were many. Among these depressed classes the Ezhavas stood in the forefront, both in numerical strength and in educational advancement. But the community still continued to be a depressed class community and its grievances remained unredressed. The members of the community were not admitted to all the Government schools in the State or in all the Government hostels. All the public roads and all the Government *satrams* were not thrown open to them. The community was not adequately represented in all the branches of the public service. They had not the privilege of returning their own representatives to the Legislative Council. The Hindu temples of the State were shut against them. The freedom of movement, one of the elementary rights of a citizen, was denied to the community. The principle of throwing open all public roads and public institutions to all the peoples of the State, without distinction of caste, creed or colour, was universally accepted. The Legislative Council had also passed a resolution recommending the throwing open of all public roads, tanks and *satrams* to all classes of people. But the Government had not done anything in the matter yet. The member requested the Dewan to advise His Highness the Maha Raja to issue a Proclamation throwing open all public roads and public institutions maintained from public funds to all classes of people and making punishable any attempt,

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